

Social Entrepreneurs and Educational Leadership in Bangladesh

*Jill Sperandio
Lehigh University, College of Education*

Abstract

Social entrepreneurship, with its focus on innovative leadership, mirrors current interest in leadership for change in the field of education. In countries where national governments lack the resources to meet the educational needs of their populations, social entrepreneurs can develop innovative ways of providing access to education, and innovative methods of delivering education, to disadvantaged social groups. This article uses studies of educational projects in Bangladesh to consider the range of social entrepreneurship and what can be done to encourage and nurture social entrepreneurs in the field of education worldwide.

Introduction

Social entrepreneurship has become a universally embraced concept that is increasingly associated with education. National governments, including that of Britain, have called for the support of social entrepreneurs to meet the needs of disadvantaged groups that national budgets or social services have failed to help. Social entrepreneurship is seen by these governments as having the potential to renew interest in community action and non-formal education to solve local problems in increasing complex and rapidly changing societies (Danaher, Moriarity, & Danaher, 2003; Oyanagi, 2003). In many developing countries (defined for the purposes of this article as those having low levels of economic wealth resulting in limited development of educational services), financially strapped governments are struggling to meet their goals of providing socially disadvantaged groups with access to education through publicly funded education systems. This has led to an increased willingness to let other groups, both for-profit and in the voluntary or non-profit sectors, develop alternative methods of offering education. To these governments, social entrepreneurship offers the potential of increasing the availability of education and of introducing innovations that may be adopted by the national education system to improve its quality and effectiveness.

A recent theme in educational research has focused on the ability of educational institutions and systems to adapt to a rapidly changing, technologically complex society. This research has considered issues of effective school leadership, of understanding the process of introducing and sustaining innovation within schools, and of guiding changes necessitated by changing social and cultural environments (Fullan, 1991, 2001; Evans, 1996; Gardner, 2004; Senge, et al., 2000). While the primary goal of this research has been to improve and develop public education, it can potentially inform educational development in the private and voluntary sectors. The research might be guided by experience gained in the voluntary and non-profit sectors, including the work of social entrepreneurs involved in innovative education-based projects.

This article will examine the contributions of social entrepreneurs to initiating educational change in Bangladesh and the implications of their work for education worldwide. Studies of four projects undertaken by individuals and non-profit groups to enhance the educational opportunities of low-income children and women in Bangladesh will be described and analyzed for insights about the nature of social entrepreneurship in the field of education, and how it can best be utilized and promoted. The studies will be used to initiate a discussion of the contributions social entrepreneurs can make to the Bangladeshi goals for improving access to education for deprived groups, and to increasing quality of education throughout the national system. The article will consider how the case studies can contribute to improving educational quality and enhancing our understanding of educational change worldwide.

Conceptual Framework

Definitions of social entrepreneurship and most models of effective leadership of educational change have their origins in studies of corporate practice in highly industrialized countries. Fullan (2001) notes "the requirements of knowledge societies bring education and business leadership closer than they have ever been before. Corporations need souls and schools need minds (and vice versa) if the knowledge society is to survive -- sustainability demands it." (p.137). Entrepreneurship, which Dees (2003) notes has a simple dictionary definition of 'an undertaking, especially one of some scope and complication' (p.3), has come to assume a place of considerable importance in the business literature. Its definition by the business community frequently links individual creativity and innovation with an ability to sustain a business enterprise by good management and income generation. Kanter (1983) states "corporate entrepreneurs ...have something in common: the need to exercise skills in obtaining and using power in order to accomplish innovation. Beyond this, there is no one model for an entrepreneur."(p.212). Bhide (1999) states that apart from some combination of a creative idea and a superior capacity for execution, there is "no ideal entrepreneurial profile."(p.63).

Entrepreneurship within the field of social improvement has been defined in several ways (Institute for Social Entrepreneurs, 2002). One interpretation focuses on the simultaneous pursuit of both financial and social returns on investment, or using earned income strategies to achieve a social objective and seeking to sustain an organization committed to social improvement through earned income rather than donations or subsidies from individuals or the public sector. Fowler (2000) discusses this issue of earned income as an integral part of social entrepreneurship, noting two strategies that are frequently employed. Non-profit social organizations can incorporate commercial ventures to generate more self-finance for their operations, or commercial enterprises can generate a surplus that can cross-subsidize quite separate social development activities. These strategies ensure the health of the organization and its ability to operate free of the constraints that donors frequently require as a prerequisite for their support. The innovation and creativity of the entrepreneur may be exhibited both in the method of addressing the targeted social problem and in the way financial independence and project sustainability is achieved.

Other definitions of social entrepreneurship focus on the importance of innovative practices and leadership that can change how social institutions operate, rather than

their ability to self-finance. Leadbeater (1997) discussed the role of imaginative community initiatives, led by enterprising peoples, in filling 'gaps' in the British welfare system. Thompson, Alvy and Lees (2000) use examples from Britain to shape their definition of social entrepreneurs as "people who realize where there is an opportunity to satisfy some unmet need that the state welfare system will not or cannot meet, and who gather together the necessary resources (generally people, often volunteers, money and premises) and use these to 'make a difference'" (p.328). Bolton and Thompson (2000) define entrepreneurs as "people who habitually create and innovate to build something of recognized value around perceived opportunities" (p. 413).

Thompson (2002) acknowledges the similar characteristics that social entrepreneurs share with entrepreneurs in the field of business, including creativity, innovation, and good management skills. He notes, however, that the former operate in the community and are "more concerned with caring and helping than with 'making money'... They help change people's lives because they embrace important social causes." (p. 413). Like corporate entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs show diversity in both their experience of leading projects and their motivation for doing so. Some may be experienced and successful business people who wish to contribute to the societies that have enabled them to prosper on a personal level. Others are seeking to satisfy a strong personal desire to help and improve their societies, but with only limited experience of the practicalities of leading projects.

Dees (2003) advances the uncoupling of social entrepreneurship and financial return on investment a stage further. Noting that "far too many people still think of social entrepreneurship in terms of nonprofits generating earned income" (Dees, 2003, p. 1), he warns of detracting attention from the intended social outcomes and from the innovative ways of achieving social impact. Unlike the business approach to social entrepreneurship that embraces the "double bottom line" putting equal emphasis on income generation and social benefit, Dees suggests innovation and social impact must be the measure of sound social entrepreneurship, which should be promoted broadly with the intent of improving the world. He notes that creative resource strategies that enhance social impact need not be entirely profit oriented because "an enterprise is not necessarily a business" (p.3). Dees suggests that compassion, voluntary sharing of wealth, and interdependence should be at the heart of social entrepreneurship.

In the field of educational research, the language of social entrepreneurship resonates most strongly with that of the 'leading in and for change' literature emerging from national and state school reform movements in the developed world, despite the very different social contexts in which social entrepreneurship and school reform currently take place. Case studies of successful innovation in the corporate world have been used to model the nature and process of change; these models have been transferred to educational setting to consider how change and innovation can be introduced and guided in a school or national education system. Senge et al., (2000) discuss the "diverse innovations needed to lead to a coherent overall pattern of deep change" (p. 53). Fullan (1990) notes the need for everyone in the educational system to understand the process of change if schools are to become congenial to innovation, an idea echoed in the model of self-renewing schools and learning communities postulated by Joyce, Wolf and Calhoun (1993).

Many models of effective educational leadership for change and innovation draw on corporate studies. Evans (1996) defines effective leadership for change as requiring a quest for integrity, an effort that is at once moral, philosophical, and practical, and that is binary, both top-down and bottom-up. Schwahn and Spady (1998) note the importance of leaders empowering others if they are to achieve their goals by stating, "Empowerment honors the intrinsic motivation of people to use their expertise to best advantage and gives them a direct stake in achieving personal and organizational success." (p.6). Fullan (2001) asserts that charismatic leaders alone cannot produce deep and sustained reform as this depends on organizational, rather than individual, understanding of the need for change. He postulates a model of leadership for innovation focused on five leadership traits - maintaining a clear moral purpose, understanding the change process, sharing knowledge, cultivating relationships, and setting a vision and context for innovation.

Understanding the need and purpose for change and innovation, being guided by a clear moral purpose, communicating a strong vision of projected outcomes, procuring or leveraging resources, and managing these resources to support innovation effectively are commonly occurring themes in literature of social entrepreneurship and educational change. As such, social entrepreneurs might be expected to be potentially effective innovators and leaders of change in formal and non-formal education in the developed and developing world.

The Case Studies

The four case studies that follow describe non-profit projects attempting to address issues of access to education and the empowerment of women and girls, issues for which Bangladesh continues to seek solutions. There are high levels of illiteracy, unemployment, and poverty amongst the country's population of 144 million people. It is estimated that 40% of children eligible for primary education do not participate in the full five-year cycle of schooling despite government efforts to achieve universal primary education and non-government organization efforts to provide for children neglected by public sector schools. Additional problems of schooling in Bangladesh include the fact that teachers in public schools deliver a prescribed curriculum by emphasizing rote learning, and a third of children who do attend school remain non-literate or semi-literate (BRAC, 1999). These problems are greater in urban slum areas with highly transient populations.

Each case study will be examined for characteristics assigned to social entrepreneurship and leadership for educational change: innovativeness, vision and moral purpose in leadership, the building of relationships, the effective use of resources and building of sustainability, and the transferability of innovation and organizational features to other situations.

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee

In the context of education, the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) closely fits both the model of social entrepreneurship and that of educational change. BRAC's founder, Fazle Hazar Abed, has used many of the techniques employed by Mohamed Yunus, recognised as a pioneer of large-scale social entrepreneurship and

advocate of a social-consciousness driven private sector. His vision is reflected in the activities of the Grameen Bank, which initiated a highly successful process of making of small interest-free loans available to rural Bangladeshis.

BRAC similarly includes many different enterprises that generate income for loan programs, but the organization has also pioneered large-scale social entrepreneurship in the field of education. BRAC's Educational Program (BEP) focuses on combating the high dropout rate from government schools (30% by fifth grade) and providing education for children of the rural poor who have never attended school due primarily to their parents' need for their labor (Walden, 2003). In 1985, the program began with 22 schools, and it now serves 34,000 schools with 1.1 million students. Children pay no fees, and BEP provides their school materials (BRAC, 2005).

BEP has clear and noteworthy outcomes. In addition to equipping over 1 million children with basic literacy and mathematical skills, BEP schools have been of particular benefit to girls in a country where female literacy is 29%. Girls make up 70% of the students of the BRAC schools, which is especially significant considering that research from other developing countries indicates that improved educational opportunities for girls may help them delay marriage and childbirth (BRAC, 1999).

BEP cites five features of its program as being innovative in the context of the Bangladesh education system: gender focus, flexible school timing, appealing learning environment, community schools, and class size. The focus on gender includes the recruitment of women teachers to help retain female students. Class size is limited to 33 students taught by the same teacher during the three or four year course, to promote a friendly relationship between the teacher and students. Flexible school timing allows children to contribute their labor to the family as well as attend school, which contributes to high attendance and low dropout rates of the schools. Developing small neighborhood schools allows easy accessibility for students and parent and community involvement. The attractive learning environment includes a curriculum tailored to rural life, which encourages a learner-centered participatory approach, group activities, child-to-child activities, a design that promotes creativity, and an emphasis on critical thinking and problem solving abilities.

Initial funding for the BEP was drawn from BRAC's commercial activities, but the success of the educational enterprise and effective marketing to international aid organizations has led to high levels of donor funding. At present, 96% of its operating costs come from a consortium of international donors, and targeted donations contribute as well. Interviews with the project manager at the BRAC headquarters in Dhaka suggest that this support, while vital to expanding the educational schemes, does not jeopardize the organization's integrity (Sperandio, 2005A).

In the process of fulfilling its primary purpose of providing access to education for the children of the rural poor, BRAC has provided work opportunities for 34,000 teachers, the majority of whom are women. Female teacher trainers on bicycles or motorbikes visit women teachers in village schools around their district. For these women, involvement in the organization has been an empowering experience, given the traditional status of

women in Bangladeshi society and the limited employment opportunities available to them. As a result, they are thoroughly invested in the success of the organization.

The transferability of BEP is illustrated by the interest expressed by a number of other countries seeking to extend access to primary education and to increase girls' access to education, and by its replication in countries such as Afghanistan, Mali, and Zambia.

Society for Lowest Urban Mass

A one-man initiative to provide basic education for children from the poorest families has been started in one of the shantytowns in the northeast section of the city. Chitto Halder runs a two-room school; an additional room of the organization houses several sewing machines and tables; a fourth is a small office, complete with a computer.

This school, the Bright Stars Project, is operated by the Society for Lowest Urban Mass (SLUM), a group Halder has organized to act as a school board. Started in 2003, the school provides a free education for 5-14 year old underprivileged children who have either dropped out of or have never attended government schools. The children meet each afternoon in the two classrooms, with 20 children and one teacher per class. The students receive school uniforms, snacks, books and stationary, and the opportunity to participate in art competitions and sports. Halder has used his knowledge of the community, gleaned through visits to the families of the students, to design an educational package that is attractive to parents faced with the prospect of reduced income from the lost labor of their children attending school. In addition to the educational package, mothers and elder sisters of students can participate in six months of sewing and tailoring training at the school (SLUM, 2004).

Both the free classes and the sewing training are financed by an English medium kindergarten school that operates in the same premises for the children of a slightly higher social group that is able to pay a small amount for schooling. For this social group, the school is seen as an excellent preparation for the government schools. The small class size, attention to English language teaching, and use of the books and curriculum used in the government elementary schools create a demand for places in the school.

Another innovative aspect into the Bright Stars Project is the links forged by its founder to several private international schools catering to the expatriate and high-income Bangladeshi families in the area. This has provided the Bright Stars project with access to a source of teacher training for its teachers, who are given the skills to adopt child-centered teaching techniques and create simple teaching aids from local materials. As a result, the classroom activities look very different from those found in the local government schools that are highly dependent on textbook-based rote learning.

Halder hopes to expand, but only within the small slum community in which he currently operates. He plans to set up two community centers, each containing a school, a health center and a vocational training center. In these centers, services for those unable to afford to pay will be financed by those who can and from the sale of goods produced in the training center. Loans or donations would allow the purchase of the building and the payment of the salaries until the centers became established and self-supporting (Society for Lowest Urban Mass, 2004).

Quality Teaching Project

The links forged by Halder to the benefit of the Bright Stars Project lead back to a teaching training scheme initiated by a British teacher trainer in conjunction with the administrators and owners of a large for-profit international school with a strong community service ethos. The teacher training program--Quality Teaching--was designed to improve teaching techniques for teachers in the privately operated, government supported non-formal primary education sector (ATWUC, 2004). It focuses on teaching skills that foster student participation and cognitive development. The underlying assumptions of the training are that by helping teachers to develop student skills such as understanding, analysis, organization, prioritizing, planning, evaluation, communication and reasoning, teachers help underprivileged children access their rights to protection and survival while giving them the tools for life long learning. Participants in the training scheme study in an environment in which they can think about teaching and learning, and network and bond with other teachers in similar circumstances.

The Quality Teaching Project (QTP) was collaboratively developed by the teacher training school and the international school, in order to make this training available to groups of teachers from local schools serving low-income students. Beneficiaries of the training are expected to progressively take on the leadership, training, and communication roles initially adopted by the expatriate trainer and teachers at the international school. Opportunities for teachers who have completed the training to meet and share experiences, support and encourage one another, and generate ideas and solutions, have also been provided. An association of the teachers who have completed the training was founded in June 2004 with the motto 'Working Together', and the association now produces a newsletter and organizes meetings and social events.

Although the founders of the training scheme have now left the country, the international school continues to host the training and meetings, and act as banker for the association. The fee paid to teachers who now lead the training sessions is recovered from groups, often non-government organizations (NGOs) or private aid organizations such as World Vision, that view the project as an important way to improve delivery of their own educational services, and that indirectly finance teachers who do not have the benefits of organizations like QTP.

The QTP introduces teaching methods that are innovative in the context of Bangladesh's traditional education system to people without formal teaching certification who are using them to help disadvantaged children obtain an effective education. It uses a social network that includes volunteer expatriate teachers and trainers, the infrastructure of a private school, local NGOs and charity organizations who buy the training and fund individuals who cannot pay, and has been expanded by an association of 'graduates' of the course to provide sustainability and support. If, however, demand for the course by the outside agencies that can pay for it ceases to exist or if the international school withdraws support, QTP may not prove sustainable (ATWUC, 2004).

The ASHA project

A final case study, from the same area of Dhaka and with connections to the two small projects previously examined, is the ASHA Project, an initiative of a British couple. They

established a hostel for illiterate street girls found working in the markets of a squatter settlement, where they were employed to sort rags, carry bundles, or break bricks. Meider Jonno Asha 'Hope for Girls' (ASHA) provides an education in both English and Bangla for the 20 girls living at the hostel and nearly 100 more who walk to the hostel every day. The mission of the hostel founders is empowering the girls through education to escape the early marriage, early child-bearing, and low paid work that are common among their social class. A small payment is made to parents of the older girls to encourage them to allow the girls to continue to attend school, and regular open days and events are held to bring the parents into the community of the hostel.

Teachers at the hostel are either international volunteers or untrained Bangladeshis from the surrounding community, who provide lessons that range from science to training in the production of handicrafts. The older girls are expected to help educate the younger, in the "pupil teacher" structure of the hostel. The hostel is registered as a charity in Scotland and receives most of its funding from Scottish church donations, although a small amount of money is raised by selling the craft work of the girls in the hostel shop.

The oldest cohort of girls, now 17 and 18 years old, have spent four years in the hostel, and are highly literate in Bangla, have a good command of English language skills, and receive training in handicrafts and teaching skills from their work in the hostel. Seeking an opportunity to raise the expectations of the girls, and give them a realistic understanding of modern work environments, the hostel leaders and the international school involved in the Quality Teaching Project collaborated to offer the girls an opportunity to take part in a "work for women" initiative. This involved the girls attending the international school two days a week for two months, shadowing women employed there in a variety of work in order to learn about their lives and careers as well as their daily experiences in the classroom. These women, who are all volunteers, served as role models and mentors for the girls during the visits, and supported their participation in classroom-based tasks.

The people involved in the ASHA project and "women and work" collaboration might describe their efforts as charity or community service. However, the ASHA project involves many elements of social entrepreneurship and leadership for educational change. The hostel is innovative in that it offers girls an opportunity to reject an environment that disadvantages them in favor of one where they are safe and can concentrate on acquiring skills to improve their lives. The combination of non-formal teaching and peer teaching has enabled the girls to become literate in two languages in four years, and gain a basic understanding of mathematics, science, and some craft training.

The "women and work" project was innovative in that it provided adolescent girls with an opportunity to see themselves in a modern work environment, and to receive encouragement from women they admire. The girls' diaries clearly indicate the empowering nature of the experience. One noted that her mentor "...boosted [her] confidence by saying that [she] can achieve what [she] truly want[s]. [The mentor] fed [the girl's] dream by pointing out that there are plenty of female teachers and [she] can become one of them too. If [she does], [she does] not have to depend on anyone." (ASHA Participant diary). Moreover, few Bangladeshi girls would have the opportunity to see a

computer-based work place and interact with women from different social classes and different countries as these girls have done.

The sustainability of these initiatives is questionable, because they are dependent on the goodwill of donors of both money and facilities, and on the leadership of the hostel and international school. The innovation is also highly situational; it has proven to be successful for this group of girls in a particular place at a specific time. However, the projects offer insight for effective methods of improving the education of disadvantaged girls, which could guide other educational endeavors in other contexts.

Analysis

These case studies describe enterprises differing significantly in scale and resourcing that are driven by the same vision: the empowering of disadvantaged individuals, particularly girls and women, through the provision of basic education and opportunities to learn marketable skills in a country where access to education and employment is limited for many people. The leaders of these enterprises are innovative in their use of available resources. They employ innovative approaches to the delivery of education, although it could be argued that they are innovative only when compared to the formal educational system of the country in which they are situated. Several of the projects described are financially self-sustaining, and all of them generate some level of self-funding.

From the standpoint of initiating and leading educational change, these projects demonstrate how much can be done with very limited resources when the vision is clear and the individuals concerned with achieving this vision are driven by a strong sense of moral purpose. The leaders involved with these projects perceived a need and then acquired the knowledge necessary for tackling the problem, and they were willing to employ unconventional methods to achieve their goals for improving educational in Bangladesh. In the process they developed relationships and networks that expanded, supported, and sustained the enterprise.

Discussion

These case studies suggest that social entrepreneurship has the potential to make major contributions to education in three key areas: experimenting with innovative methods of teaching and learning; developing models of collaboration including support networks and partnerships with educational enterprises in the private sector, and modeling non-traditional leadership for educational institutions. A more detailed examination of each of these areas is warranted, as they also suggest ways in which educational social enterprise can be encouraged and nurtured.

Innovative methods of teaching and learning

The case study projects suggest how the non-formal education sector, with innovative leadership, can lead the way in advancing educational change within a country. In the national or formal education sector, introducing educational change, particularly in teaching methodology, requires realigning training colleges and certification, re-educating school administrators, and retraining the existing teaching force, all of whom are hampered by traditional practices, professional organizations, and lack of financial resources.

Social entrepreneurs seeking to develop new educational structures or experiment with new methods are less constrained by this paradigm. They may be free of the constraints placed on government-regulated schools that require public approval for change, and on private sector schools where change is conditional on increasing income. Social entrepreneurs are often 'starting from scratch', rather than restructuring, renewing, or reforming. If they are outside the formal system, they do not have to cope with organizational memory and tradition, or with the associated feelings of loss as traditional, trusted methods are discarded and new ideas and mindsets are introduced. New enterprises find it easier to involve individuals on the basis of their interest and commitment, and to train them to use innovative teaching methods that do not rely on expensive teaching aids or textbooks. If new methods are seen to be effective in allowing disadvantaged groups to achieve academically, demand will increase for teachers trained in the methods and for institutions offering the methods. The financial resources necessary to scale up will follow.

Building social networks and collaborating with commercial educational enterprise

The case studies raise the issue of scale in relationship to the effectiveness of a project, where scale is defined by the numbers of people who benefit. While all the projects appear very successful when measured by outcomes for participants, BEP is clearly free of the concerns about sustainability and income generation that the other projects face. The very size of the BEP operation attracts attention; the numbers of people it serves, the clearly delineated organizational structure, the business expertise that it can summon, and the amount of time its leader devotes to promoting the project, have accrued funds that not only sustain the program but allow it to expand and contemplate new projects.

The smaller projects are only a few among many small projects operating in the urban areas of Dhaka, and as such are much less visible and find it much harder to generate and attract income. The case study enterprises suggest that lack of financial resources can be offset in other ways. Innovative project leaders develop links to community resources, both public and private, knowing that use of just one computer and printer, for example, will allow the production of teaching materials, access to the internet, a training tool for computer use and typing, and a way of locating new resources that can assist teachers in a number of one classroom schools.

In three of the case study projects, the sharing of the modern infrastructure and access to services of private sector international schools--the use of buildings, auditoriums, banking, and volunteer help of teachers and students trained in progressive teaching and learning--helped anchor the projects. The high status international schools' recognition and endorsement gave the projects a higher profile in the community and to donors, which helped them lever other resources. The international school community benefited from the collaboration by having the opportunity to share skills and develop awareness and compassion in line with the schools' declared mission to be involved with the wider community.

The links between the case study projects illustrate the importance of networking and collaboration for small enterprises to increase their sustainability and access to resources--Bright Stars teachers benefited from the Quality Teaching Project; their school provided a demonstration site for the teaching methods being advocated and supplied

trainers and organizers for the training scheme. In addition, the scheme is linked to the ASHA project to provide training and an opportunity to find teaching positions in non-formal education for the low-income ASHA participants. Helping foster such links and networks could be an important method for nurturing the work of social entrepreneurs.

Educationally informed leadership

The cited examples of social entrepreneurship demonstrate the importance of leadership from outside the formal education sector. Recognition of the importance of introducing non-traditional leadership in school systems in the United States has been a recent issue. Hess and Kelly (2005) note "...efforts to bring non-traditional principals into school systems often attract candidates whose experiences and strengths are in short supply... An infusion of such principals who can pioneer new routines and mentor their peers can provide workable examples of entrepreneurial leadership and help transform school management" (Hess & Kelly, 2005). BEP's work with rural schools demonstrated the effectiveness of leaders with business backgrounds, while highlighting the need for these leaders to experience modern educational thinking and methodology in order to avoid replicating an existing system that has failed a large proportion of the population.

Conclusion

Bangladesh is home to varied examples of social entrepreneurship focusing on the provision of basic education to disadvantaged sectors of the population. While the definition of social entrepreneurship is still evolving, the case studies examined in this article suggest evidence of congruity with evolving theories concerning effective leadership and change in educational settings. The use of corporate examples in the developed world for informing the construction of models of such leadership could be augmented by studies of effective social entrepreneurship in the field of education and the organizational structures that enable social entrepreneurs to empower people.

Social entrepreneurship has the potential to provide a laboratory for developing innovative approaches to many aspects of education and educational change, including teacher training, classroom and school organization, and community involvement. As such, it warrants further research, particularly that which may contribute to clarifying the definition of educational innovation. Are the innovative educational practices adopted by social entrepreneurs situation-specific to the localities in which they are developed, or can all countries learn from them as they attempt to meet the challenges of sophisticated technology and rapidly changing lifestyles?

Fostering social entrepreneurship in education is clearly desirable, but how this is best accomplished is unclear and needs further research. The case studies from Bangladesh suggest that help with initial start up costs is useful, as are opportunities to develop links and networks with other entrepreneurial projects, whether formal education initiatives or the private education sector. How to provide social entrepreneurs the freedom to experiment and innovate while ensuring the safety and rights of children affected is also an issue that needs to be addressed. Publicizing examples of educational excellence produced by social entrepreneurship, and of the entrepreneurial educational leaders who create successful projects, will offer an opportunity to enhance local and national educational systems worldwide.

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